

LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

NEWS RELEASE

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LED Awarded \$4 Million Grant from Economic Development Administration

Baton Rouge, LA – October 21, 2005 – Louisiana Economic Development today announced it was awarded a \$4 million grant from the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) for economic recovery efforts in hurricanes Katrina and Rita impacted areas.

“In the thirteen parishes most dramatically impacted over 81,000 businesses – 41 percent of our state’s total business community – with 90 percent being small businesses,” LED Secretary Michael J. Olivier said. “We need the support of EDA and other federal agencies to get Louisiana businesses running and workers earning. We also appreciate grants like this that allow us to invest and partner with local economic development allies to provide direct service.”

The EDA grant’s scope of work is divided into three parts: restoring business and investor confidence, technical assistance and capacity building and long-term recovery strategy.

Restoring Business and Investor Confidence. This section includes conveying to the national and international business communities that Louisiana is open for business and anticipates a strong recovery with many private sector opportunities. Activities include communications campaign planning, development and production of materials and regional, national and international media purchases.

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building. This portion will provide: financial support for economic development organizations (EDOs) to directly assist impacted businesses; support for displaced EDOs to continue operations; enhance LED’s internal research and analysis capacity and allow LED to establish unique business counseling services staffed by volunteer economic development professionals providing sustainable business planning. Six business assistance centers recently opened and are funded in part by this portion of the grant in Baton Rouge, Covington, Houma, Lake Charles, Metairie and New Orleans. Additional centers will open as resources are available.

Long -term Recovery Strategy. LED now has the opportunity to call upon the best national and international resources to develop a long term economic recovery strategy for the state. EDA funds will be used for facilitating and arranging working sessions and conferences as well as implementing plans from those sessions and conferences.

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The mission of Louisiana Economic Development is to provide excellence in leadership, policy and programs to create a business climate enabling public-private linkages, which result in capital investment, a diversified economic base and quality job opportunities for all Louisiana citizens.